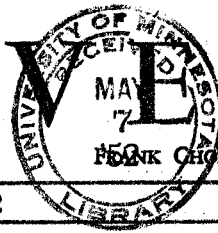


HUMAN EVENTS

FRANK C. HANIGHEN, *Editor*



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Expediency and Power: It may go down in the school books this way:

On April 25, 1952, the attorney for the Executive, Mr. Baldridge, appeared before Judge Pine and said: "It is our position that the President is accountable only to the country, and that the President's decisions are conclusive."

Judge Pine asked: "You assail the efficacy of our Government procedures set out by our Constitution?"

Baldridge: "Not at all. We think the Executive had the power."

Judge Pine: "You have a lack of confidence in the procedures set out by our Constitution to meet an emergency situation."

Baldridge: "On April 8, this procedure [the seizure] seemed the only way."

Judge Pine: "We have had crises in this country before and had Government machinery adequate to cope with them. You are arguing for expediency."

Baldridge: "You may call it that if you wish. We say it is expediency backed by power."

Judge Pine put the question: "Then the Constitution limits Congress and it limits the Judiciary, but does not limit the Executive?"

Baldridge: "That is the way we read the Constitution."

The hearing closed. But Judge Pine retired to his chambers, studied the case (of the Executive's seizure of private property) and on April 29, gave his historic decision against the Executive, ruling that the President's seizure of the steel plants was illegal and therefore unconstitutional.

Judge Pine found that the President had no "inherent" power to seize this property, saying: "It [the Government] derives its authority wholly from the powers granted to it by the Constitution, which is the only source of power authorizing action by any branch of Government. It is a Government of limited, enumerated and delegated powers. The office of President of the United States is a branch of the Government, namely, that branch where the executive power is vested, and his powers are limited along with the powers of the two other great branches or departments of Government, namely, the legislative and judicial."

And Judge Pine remarked: "I believe that the contemplated strike, if it came, with all its awful results, would be less injurious to the public than the injury which would flow from a timorous judicial recognition that there is some basis for this claim to unlimited and unrestrained executive power, which would be implicit in a failure to grant the injunction. Such recognition would undermine public confidence in the very edifice of government as it is known under the Constitution."

Labor and Seizure: Although many labor leaders apparently support the President's seizure of steel, there is no little concern expressed privately in labor circles. Many labor executives look into the future and wonder whether such unconstitutional methods might not bear down on unions.

One prominent head of an important union, perceiving the menace, came out publicly — before the Pine decision — condemning the steel seizure. "In the light of the Cleveland rails decision and the seizure of the steel industry, this nation now is faced with the spectre of continued and expanding involuntary servitude unless present seizure tactics are wiped out on constitutional grounds," said James P. Shields, Grand Chief Engineer of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers, on April 15.

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Shields went on, "Even if industries concerned are returned to private ownership, the constitutionality issue must and will be settled. If men's earnings, profits and collective bargaining all can be placed in deep freeze without restrictive legislation, we'd better know it as quickly as possible."

Applying his ideas to labor specifically, Shields remarked: "When men are forced to work, paid less than they demand and offered no alternatives whatsoever — that is servitude and I'd like to know what else you can call it."

Mr. Shields and his union had good reason to reflect on and protest against seizure. For, in his statement, he referred to a decision handed down on the same day by Judge Freed of Cleveland, a ruling in favor of making permanent a no-strike railroad injunction obtained by the government last March 11. Shields complained that not only his engineers but other rail workers had received no increase since 1948 despite negotiations for more wages. (President Truman in his steel decision deplored the fact that steel workers had received no increase since 1950.)

The stand of Chief Engineer Shields has attracted more attention here in Washington (where he has his headquarters) than elsewhere. And a big national magazine, we learn by the grapevine, intends to run a feature story about him in an early issue.

The Silence of Eisenhower: As everyone knows, Eisenhower will remain silent, engage in no debates, give no revelations of how he stands on this issue or that during the pre-convention period. But like so many things that everyone knows in this capital, a fact is no sooner stated than it begins to fall apart at the seams.

In fact, within the past 48 hours, it has been disclosed — and has rapidly matured into a topic furiously discussed in corners of the Press Club — that Eisenhower has already given forth at some length, and rather specifically, on an issue so important that it is likely to precipitate a row between Congress and the President before long.

The issue is none other than the tidelands oil matter — whether the states or the Federal Government should hold ownership of the off-shore oil lands, in the Gulf of Mexico and along the California coast. Federal ownership is passionately advocated by the White House and northern "liberals", including the GOP "liberal bloc" now boosting Ike. State ownership is supported by conservatives, both Democratic and Republican. It's a big scrap.

And Ike has spoken. It happened this way. His manager in Texas, Jack Porter, sent word to the General in Paris, asking him to give a statement. Mr. Porter may well have told Ike that the tidelands issue is a hot one in Texas, and all Texans are on the conservative side on this, demanding state, rather than Federal, ownership of the off-shore oil lands.

Eisenhower replied in a letter, which has been released to the press, and widely quoted in Texas, but much less so in the North, saying that "I agree with the principle that Federal ownership in this case, as in others, is one that is calculated to bring about steady progress toward centralized ownership and control, a trend which I have bitterly opposed." We gather that this satisfied many Texans. It pleased the Ike manager, Mr. Porter; for the latter is now engaged in a fight to get control over the Texas delegation to the GOP convention.

(Our Houston correspondent reports that many Texans wonder why the General did not give forth on the subject of the 27½ per cent depletion rate for petroleum, which is an even hotter issue in that and neighboring states. For, Fair Dealers and "liberals" in the North have been advocating reduction of this rate, which would mean bankruptcy for many Texans. How long can Ike dodge this burning question?)

Texans liked Ike's stand on this matter. But the embarrassment of Northern "liberals" who like Ike is clearly visible in the nation's capital and elsewhere in the North. The "liberal" *Washington Post*, supporter of the General's candidacy, editorially says the statement is "unfortunate" and expresses "disappointment". And Senator Tobey, one of Ike's most vociferous boosters said that "Good men

go wrong on a lot of things. But I'll take a chance he'll set things right." A *New York Times* writer evinces discomfort, etc., etc.

It is professional opinion here that Ike will have to "set things right" on many more issues than tidelands, and more controversial issues, too, before many weeks are out.

Political Work: We hear that the Taft GHQ plans a "field force" to do political work throughout the country. The objective will be to keep faithful those delegates pledged to the Ohioan and to try to win over uninstructed delegates or "weaken" those pledged to Ike. If such a mission is well executed it could go far to offset the "blitz" effects of the big publicity which is expected to attend the General's return *circa* June 1st.

As a matter of fact, "political work", expended prodigally on the delegates or persons aspiring to be delegates, or on political leaders controlling same, actually assumes more importance in the pre-convention period than "write-ins", or tons of printed political propaganda. It rarely has much to do with issues, or whether the record of the national candidate is Left, Right or Center. In many cases, no patronage promises are involved. Rather "political work" is concerned with harmonizing personal differences in the local political organization, assuaging friction between ambitious leaders or finding "face-saving" solutions to such internal troubles.

We happened to listen recently to one piece of such political labor. The representative of the National Headquarters of one candidate for the GOP Presidential nomination was talking to a County Chairman (supporter of that candidate). And he talked a great deal, in an effort to smooth over some trouble in the Chairman's organization to the end that the national candidate would be assured of that county's delegate to the National Convention next July. They had a thorny problem.

What had happened was that one county leader (also vowed to the same national candidate) had tactlessly offended a number of people on the slate of delegates to the county convention, the ones who would elect the delegate. For the good of the national candidate, it was necessary to remove said tactless leader from the situation (without offending him) and to find him another post, say in the State Committee — as a "face-saver". Once he was removed, the forces of the national candidate could better achieve a majority for that precious Delegate. That sounds simple — actually it proved a prodigious task.

The ensuing discussion ranged over the past, present and future of several score of people on the slate of delegates and over the intricacies of the situation in the State Committee. In the end — after two hours talk — a strategy was arranged. Later, after a week of such toil by the national candidate's representative, the solution was finally reached. Result: one more delegate pledged.

In some 3,000 counties throughout the nation, this toilsome process goes on interminably. It should continue even after the delegates are pledged and elected. For many shifts develop, sometimes for purely local or personal reasons, which might "weaken" individual delegates in their fealty to the national candidate. Hence "trouble-shooters" must take care of this important political business. The side that has the best battalion of such specialists enjoys a better chance at the National Convention.

Ridgway: The appointment of General Ridgway to succeed Ike in Europe is acclaimed in military circles, but not in the State Department. The latter originally persuaded the President that Gruenther should be the man. But the unpredictable Mr. Truman changed his mind. The story is that a trusted old friend went to the White House at the last moment and convinced Mr. Truman that Ridgway was of much higher calibre than Gruenther. (Who the "friend" was remains a much discussed mystery here.)

The Pentagon privately says that Ridgway — in contrast to the diplomatic Gruenther — will be refreshingly blunt in his reports to Washington. He is that kind. If the recent Far East Commander

thinks the European Army is making no progress he will say so, without equivocation, to his superiors here. He will also — according to those who happen to know a great deal about some phases of his career — prove very firm in dealing with the British and French — treatment that they have not received of late. Indeed, if State and their European friends had been better briefed on Ridgway, pressure for Gruenther instead of Ridgway might have been stepped up, with the White House eventually choosing the former.

Postal Delivery: The Washington *Evening Star* has shown journalistic enterprise in a current series of feature stories about the breakdown of first class mail service, and has been rewarded with great public interest and acclaim. In its editions of April 27, the *Star* reproduced a photo of a letter postmarked in Philadelphia on April 8 and postmarked and delivered in Washington on April 21st. Then there is the case of the letter from a doctor in the 1900 block of K Street to a real estate firm 3 blocks away, which arrived at its destination eight days after the doctor mailed it. The latter apparently caused no little business delay and trouble. And then there was an unfortunate Colonel in the Pentagon who mailed his pay-check to his bank; the bank finally got it 6 days later, but meanwhile some checks signed by the Colonel bounced, to the great inconvenience of the officer and others. And so on.

Congresswoman St. George (R., N.Y.), has been very active in bringing such matters to the notice of the House Post Office Committee (of which she is a member) saying: "I am very sure that I am not alone in saying when I was home, and as I travelled over the country and as other members have travelled over the country, we were more and more assailed with criticisms of the postal service. People at home say it has never been so bad, and this a rather difficult thing to refute. As a matter of fact, we have fewer deliveries, business is being impeded, and we also have given up the directory service completely, which is working a great hardship in many localities. . . . Instead of making corrections and improvements, the Department merely stands around saying, 'You're another!' or worse." Mrs. St. George has filed a bill to restore the directory service, so that letters incorrectly addressed may reach their destination and not be returned to the sender.

Uncontrollable Interest Rates: In our issue of April 16, we commented on a report that the Treasury Department had under consideration the "sweetening" of savings bonds, in the hope that the avalanche of redemptions and maturities might be stemmed by sales. Today, the Department announced a complete revamping of its savings bond program.

Interest rates were raised slightly all along the line. The sale of F and G bonds will be discontinued as of today (April 30), and will be replaced by three new bonds bearing slightly higher interest rates; the E bond remains as is, but at maturity the holder, if he decides not to turn it in, will receive the new higher interest rate of 3 per cent.

Secretary of the Treasury Snyder described the changes as "in keeping with the times" — a roundabout admission that increased commercial interest rates are bringing pressure to bear on the government's fiscal policy. It remains to be seen whether the slight increase in interest rates will make these bonds as attractive as commercial securities. We doubt it.

The action of the Treasury points up the fact that government cannot control interest rates, any more than it can control prices or wages. (In Britain, one new issue of Treasury bonds bears a 4½ rate.) During the Roosevelt regime interest rates were held low not by government policy but by lack of demand for capital. After the war, when, despite restrictions and interference, industry went in for making things people want, the demand for capital pushed interest rates up; commercial securities became far more attractive than government paper to the run-of-the-mill investor, so that the replacement of maturing savings bonds met with resistance.

All this demonstrates, again, that controls do not control.

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